

Message Text

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70

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 COME-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5686

UNCLAS CAIRO 10260

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EGEN EG

SUBJ: CAIRO PRESS ON PROBLEMS OF TOURISM

1. CAIRO FRENCH LANGUAGE DAILY "LE PROGRES EGYPTIEN"
JULY 30 PUBLISHES ARTICLE CRITICIZING LACK OF
NATIONAL PLANNING IN TOURIST SECTOR AND CITING HIGH
COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH TOURISM IN EGYPT. NEWSPAPER
INDICATES THAT NUMBER OF TOURISTS IS DECLINING
AND STATES THAT DECREASED TOURISM WILL BE EVEN
MORE EVIDENT NEXT SEASON DUE TO COST CHARACTERIZED
AS "HIGHEST IN WORLD".

2. ARTICLE CITES SEVERAL EXAMPLES OF HIGH HOTEL
PRICES IN COMPARISON WITH EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN
ACCOMMODATIONS, NOTING RISE FROM LE 7 TO LE 27
IN DAILY ROOM RATE AT NILE HILTON AND LACK OF
DISCOUNTS FOR TOURISTS GROUPS AT CAIRO HOTELS.
ARTICLE STATES FURTHER THAT FARES FOR DOMESTIC
FLIGHTS HAVE INCREASED 200 PERCENT SINCE 1973 AND THAT
ENTRY FEES AT TOURISTS ATTRACTIONS HAVE RISEN AS
MUCH AS TEN TIMES OVER THOSE PREVAILING THREE YEARS
AGO. AUTHOR (UNNAMED) CALLS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF SITUATION
AND STRESSES THAT EGYPT MUST TAKE ACCOUNT OF FACT THAT IT
FACES BRISK COMPETITION FROM SUCH COUNTRIES AS TUNISIA,
GREECE AND SPAIN, WHICH ARE CLOSER TO "CENTER OF WORLD".
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3. COMMENT. CONTRARY TO SENSE OF ARTICLE, REPORTS FROM
MINISTRY OF TOURISM SHOW NUMBER OF TOURISTS UP 30 PERCENT
THIS YEAR OVER 1975. ARTIFICIALLY LOW PRICES EXISTED THROUGHOUT
ECONOMY PRIOR TO OCTOBER 1973 WAR, INCLUDING THOSE IN TOURIST

INDUSTRY. THESE HAVE BEEN ALLOWED TO RISE FASTER THAN MOST
BECAUSE PRIMARILY FOREIGNERS ARE AFFECTED. WITH VISIT TO
PYRAMIDS/SPHINX ONLY 80 CENTS, EVEN AT INCREASED COST (IT
COST 8CENTS IN 1973). WE TEND TO DOUBT IMMEDIATE EFFECT OF
PRICE RISES GENERALLY ON TOURIST TRAFFIC. OF MORE CONCERN, IT
SEEMS TO US, IS LAGGING QUALITY OF HOTELS AND SERVICES AVAILABLE
AND GOVERNMENTS'S SEEMINGLY INABILITY TO GET NEW TOURIST ACCOMMODA-
TION PROJECTS THROUGH BUREAUCRATIC MAZE ON PRIORITY BASIS.
EILTS

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